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Reinventing the Sea

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# The Sea as Metaphor in Alec Derwent Hope's "Man Friday" and Christopher Brennan's "Each Day I See the Long Ships Coming into Port"

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- 1 The sea beckons to the artistic and creative consciousness and countless writers have made it a significant part of their works either as a geographical entity or, even more frequently, as a symbol and a metaphor, a vehicle for their ideas. "Literature and hymnology are replete with such reflection, rendering the sea a symbolic and metaphorical narrative device rather than a real place" (Mack 2011: 17). J. A. Tillman declares that  

its surrounding the entire substance of the world, its agelessness, its 'undefinability', and at the same time its pervasive, elementary materiality make the sea the widest possible metaphor of existence (2012:11).
- 2 Spanning across continents, eras and cultures, the sea has beckoned to the human imagination in ways that few other forces have.
- 3 The ancient Vedantic scriptures compare the awakening of the consciousness to a wave rising from the sea and the sea itself is likened to the vastness of the universal nature: just as there are individual waves which rise and fall but remain one with the ocean, the individual nature of people may be separate but remains a part of the fundamental essence of the whole. For Nietzsche, the frequently used image of the sea symbolized uncharted moral waters on which he exhorted people to set sail. Walt Whitman in some of his poems offers us the sea as a metaphor for immortality while the ship is a metaphor for the human passage of life from birth to death. Another of his contemporaries, Henry David Thoreau saw the sea as a metaphor for the enhancement of the human mind as well as the boundless nature and reach of capability.

- 4 Water has come to symbolize birth or renewal or at any rate, an experience that may suggest some sort of transformation. One could even say that the metaphor of the sea seems to bracket our lives, with its associations with our pre-natal origins and the ultimate flow to death. The amniotic fluid that cushions a baby in the womb for months before it is born is saline, like the sea. At the same time, in the river's eventual merger with the vastness of the ocean lies the metaphor of death, of the individual soul becoming one with the Infinite, the Oversoul.
- 5 The ocean has very often been seen as a metaphor for consciousness and in the realm of psychology, dreams about or related to the ocean may be seen to represent the unconscious that is at times calm and, at others, turbulent.
- 6 In the two poems taken up for discussion in this article, the sea is fraught with multiple meanings; poets Alec Derwent Hope and Christopher Brennan both play with the ideas of journey by sea, exile, isolation and home in vastly different ways, and the poems poignantly embody the notions of loss and regaining. Whereas Hope's poem deals at length with the life that Daniel Defoe's *Man Friday* leads after he reaches the shores of England, Brennan imagines the thoughts and feelings that course through the travellers' minds when their ship touches the shores of Australia.

## Revisiting and Reframing of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* in A.D. Hope's "Man Friday"

- 7 A. D. Hope's poem "Man Friday" (1972: 122), originally published in 1958, begins where Daniel Defoe leaves off his tale, and takes up the story of *Man Friday* after *Robinson Crusoe* "by all his years of exile undeterred,/ Took into exile Friday and the bird." The revising, rewriting and reframing of texts that have long been considered as classics is a way of presenting a counterpoint to the prevailing canonical voice. They can thus be said to be new ways of reading and interpreting texts. The telling of a story from another point of view can be seen as an attempt to explore, and perhaps bridge, the spaces and silences in a text in order to give voice to the hitherto ignored. If writing is regarded as a strong form of control — culturally and morally —, the rewriting and reframing of texts that featured (often male) superiority at their core can be viewed as an act of liberation for those who were depicted as subordinate or inferior. The text, so revised and rewritten, is inevitably oppositional; it questions and regenerates the established text; it fleshes out, extends and gives an added dimension to certain characters that have been portrayed as inferior or have been relegated to a position of neglect; it challenges the authority of the prevailing text.
- 8 The revisiting of canonical texts (e.g. Brontë's 1847 *Jane Eyre* in Jean Rhys's 1966 *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the *Mahabharata* in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's 2008 *The Palace of Illusions*) which are often radical re-interpretations of the original, have been both the cause and the consequence of much work in the area of cultural studies. They specially relate to marginalised sections of society such as women, 'lower' races and castes, tribal and aboriginal communities, and so on. The reframing has been made based on the recognition that the earlier narratives were told from the perspective of the mainstream culture with all its attendant attitudes and values, and this most often resulted in a neglect and/or oppression of those who were not considered as part of the mainstream.

- 9 In A. D. Hope's poem, Crusoe, rescued through Providence and now, "no less providential", takes Friday along with him to live in "England's Desert Island" without a thought for what that voyage would entail for Friday. Hope makes it clear that the decision was entirely Crusoe's. His decision to take Friday away to England is similar to the forced transportation of slaves from Africa. The completely alien culture that Friday now encounters requires a massive readjustment of his mental and spiritual compass and the sea runs like an undercurrent through the entire poem even though it is not mentioned in so many words.
- 10 Hope views the sea as metaphor in other poems as well. In "The End of a Journey" for instance, he refers to Ulysses "grimly" watching "his enemy, the sea" ringing his kingdom as an old man returned from his adventures, "a castaway on so cruel a shore!" (1972: 1). This line echoes in the reader's mind and Friday, uprooted from his native island, is then perceived to be as much a castaway as Ulysses on a "cruel shore".
- 11 It is a mirror image of what Crusoe had to undergo as a survivor on Friday's island where he had to contrive ways and means to stay alive: to pick stuff off the wreck — biscuits and nails and his "firestick" — and endeavour to build, bake and brew, stitch a coat or cobble a shoe. But for Friday, it is not so much food, shelter and warmth for his body that he has to arrange but "shelter for the solitary mind" and ways to "warm his wits and keep the heart alive." It is not enough to nourish the body for the mind has to develop ways of dealing with loneliness and alienation and to "protect among the cultured, [...] the natural man." Whereas Crusoe had to make clothes to cover his nakedness, conversely, Friday has to "labour to invent his nakedness", to return to a state of elemental being like the elemental force of the sea on the shore of which he had been born and raised. There is also a reference to cannibal practices associated with "island feasts" and which is echoed in a different context later on in the poem.
- 12 Afraid that the strange customs of the land of his exile may swallow him up without a trace — like a ship sunk into the depths of the sea — Friday has to keep his legends and language alive by repeating them to himself every night. Memories swirl around his brain as he goes over and over his life on his island where everything revolved around the sea — "[...] wet canoes nosing the still lagoon", the "spicy mess of yam and fish" and the "island feasts".
- 13 Edouard Glissant says that, in the context of the transport of black slaves — of people who were forcibly carried away from their homes over the sea and pressed into bondage —, the sight and very notion of the sea during their voyage to an unknown destination appears as:
- [...] a pale murmur; you do not know if it is a storm cloud, rain or drizzle, or smoke from a comforting fire. The banks of the river have vanished on both sides of the boat. What kind of river, then, has no middle? Is nothing there but straight ahead? Is this boat sailing into eternity toward the edges of a non-world that no ancestor will haunt? Paralleling this mass of water, the third metamorphosis of the abyss thus projects a reverse image of all that had been left behind, not to be regained for generations except — more and more threadbare — in the blue savannas of memory or imagination (1997: 6-7).
- 14 For Glissant, since the sea carries the dreadful cargo of humans destined to be slaves in exile, it is to be viewed as an accomplice to the crime that is being committed on its waters. The same can be said of Hope's poem as Crusoe carries Friday away over the sea into exile.

- 15 For all Friday's efforts to pile "memories against his need", he finds that the past gradually recedes as he gets more and more pulled into his new life with all its strange customs. The past does not vanish in one go, naturally. It "recedes" like the shore of his island home must have — dropping away down the horizon as the ship carrying Friday away moved out into deeper waters until finally the island could no longer be glimpsed at all. The journey away from home is "the rupture with the matrix [...] the beginning of the uprooted memory" and the attempt to hold on to the memories is akin to "a sea to be crossed, between real and memory. [...] The sea is in you. You have to reach it, above oblivion." (Glissant 1969: 188-9, quoted by Bonnet 2002: 15).
- 16 In the years that follow, Friday is transformed into "an upper servant" who learns how to dress, eat, speak and conduct himself in accordance with his position. And when "his master, thoughtful for his need", arranges to get a wife for him and gives "him leave to breed" (the irony is unmistakeable), Friday manages to set up a household and soon becomes a family man, although his "mulatto" wife thinks she is too good for the likes of him — "a low native Indian from the wood".
- 17 Where are the gods that Friday once worshipped? Having been "brushed, barbered, hatted, trousered and baptized", Friday now looks "civilized", a manservant who knows his place and performs all his valet tasks to perfection. The gradual acceptance of the way of life that is thrust upon Friday, his transformation (and quiet resignation) into a menial well versed in domestic chores, his subsequent marriage and children, take him farther and farther away from his memories of home and encase him within an artificial persona adrift on a pitiless sea. England has appeared to devour him completely like a "Cannibal Island" or like the sea that swallows entire ships and keeps them concealed in its depths. The sea then has deconstructed the person that Friday was before he was carried off by Crusoe and then reconstructed him again as he takes up a new life in England under the training of his master. The cannibalistic practices associated with Friday's native island are now evoked ironically to signify England, the land of his exile which has swallowed up the man that he once was.
- 18 And so, Friday takes "root in England" and earns a good reputation for himself in his circles. The plant that was uprooted from its native shore has been carried by the sea waves to establish itself on another beach much like the waves are wont to do with various sea grasses. And yet, in spite of all the outward accoutrements of the "civilized man" and the fact that he appeared to be "resigned" and then "content", vestiges of his former (real?) life still gleam in his eyes or in his speech — "some colouring of speech, some glint of pride". Like the sea which may appear outwardly serene but conceals in its depths the currents of an approaching storm, Friday's demeanour masks a turbulence as is revealed towards the end of the poem.
- 19 One day, Friday accompanies his master to a seaport and hears the ocean's beckoning roar for the first time in many years. The ancient sound of wild wind and tide beating against the shore does not allow him to fall into slumber that night — unlike Crusoe who, unmoved by the crashing of the waves on the beach, soon falls asleep. Friday, on the other hand, lies sleepless on his bed all night, listening to the primordial music and regular rhythm of the breakers. The sounds of the sea fill his entire being, dredging up perhaps long-forgotten memories rising up like the mammoths of the sea that were thought to have become extinct.
- 20 The hypnotic reverberation of the most elemental forces of nature, "that tremendous voice so long unheard" is like the sirens' song that drew many a sailor to their doom. In

Homer's epic, Ulysses had himself roped to the mast to escape from the sirens. In Hope's "The End of a Journey", the man ruefully muses after his return to his kingdom: "To have heard the sirens sing and yet have fled" only to return as an old man to sleep "with his housekeeper". Friday does not — cannot — resist the call of the ocean however, and finally feels compelled to make his way down to the seashore as dawn breaks.

- 21 The pale light of the pre-sunrise moments reveals the dunes, the rocks and the beach stretching away for miles; wet sand is freshly brought in by the ever-incoming waves into the bay as plumes of foam rise like smoke from the crests of the billows that beat against the shore in exactly the same way they did in his long-lost island home. As Friday surveys the scene assailed by who knows what upsurges of memory and nostalgia, he sees, in a heart-stopping moment, the imprint of a bare foot on the sand.
- 22 Friday recognizes that the indentation in the sand had been made by someone who had never worn a shoe and could not be an European but only such a one as he who, at an earlier time, lost in the mists of the sea spray, could identify certainly the tribe of the person the print belonged to as well as the purpose of the journey. With a stab of remembrance, he realizes that he had made such prints too so very long ago and that his eyes were not mistaken in identifying it for what it was now. It seems entirely probable that Hope had the indigenous Australians in mind when he wrote this poem and the mention of a bare footprint on the beach brings up a number of connotations — the indigenous peoples' imprint on the sands of time, for instance, with their ancient songs, beliefs and way of life completely attuned to nature pitted against the imposition of the coloniser's alien practices.
- 23 As Friday stands looking out at the "grey German Ocean's flood", the sight of his home flashes upon him suddenly as though he had been transported in a moment to the shore where "Orinoco pours into the main" and hears the cries of "spirits silent now for many a day". And, like a snake sloughing off its skin, "all his years of exile fell away." The song of the ocean, the rush of memory and Friday's response to the call of the sea crystallize in the ending of the poem.
- 24 The lonely years of exile spent away from the sounds and sights of all that he had grown up with are all subsumed into that one moment when he discards all the accoutrements of 'civilization' as he takes off his European clothing and rushes to meet the waves and be submerged in them. Drowning in the sea waters is far, far better than to remain in a state of artificial limbo pretending to be what he was not and could never be. The isolation that the sea symbolises appears less terrifying than the isolation of the inauthentic life on shore and it throws up existential questions related to concepts of liberty and free will.
- 25 When Crusoe comes looking for his faithful servant at noon, he follows the footprints on the beach, finds Friday's clothes and shoes abandoned on the sand and grieves as he guesses that he has drowned. However, when the sea returns Friday's body to the shore later in the day, Crusoe does not realize that "Friday had been rescued and gone home."
- 26 From a certain perspective, Friday's choice of death by drowning might suggest both surrender and empowerment. Being compelled to live a life such as Hope describes in his poem, Friday is ultimately drawn towards the unceasingly murmuring sea that subtly holds out an invitation to meander through its chasms of solitude. When he allows himself to be submerged in a final gesture which symbolises a giving up of the

new man and the alien life that he leads, as well as a regaining of his old self, it is as if the wave has finally reached its shore.

- 27 What can be said about someone preferring to embrace death rather than continue with a life that, to all intents and purposes, was a 'comfortable' one? To make assumptions on someone else's behalf without ever pausing to think or ask them what their ideas or wishes are; to make life-altering decisions arbitrarily for someone else; to infer, from the outward serenity of the person that they are content with what has been provided to them — are all egoistic and offensive. And yet this has always been the practice of the powerful. Similarly, to conclude that one's own culture and customs are superior and that the 'others' require to be 'educated' out of their own beliefs and drawn into a foreign way of life has been the way of colonizers throughout the ages.
- 28 A.D. Hope's poem not only raises issues of choice, 'savagery' versus 'civilization' and the arrogation of power over the lives of those who are not as strong and are painfully vulnerable, it also envisions the sea as both a dividing barrier leading to exile and a welcoming bosom into the embrace of which to return is to go 'home'. Hope infuses the narrative with the resonances of forced transportation, exile, barriers, division and finally, home. Seen through the postcolonial lens, Hope's narrative of the story of Man Friday is a re-telling from a hitherto ignored perspective which turns Defoe's classic inside out and offers a critical view of the power of European imperial superiority and whiteness which, as Delys Bird says in the context of the 'settling' of Australia and the consequent naming and mapping of it in the English language, were naturalised as normative standards in English (1998: 23). By revisiting and reframing the canon, Hope gives voice to a character who has been silenced and lives in our collective consciousness only as the symbol of a faithful slave.

## The Shaping of Australia by the Migrant Experience in Christopher Brennan's "Each Day I See the Long Ships Coming Into Port"

- 29 Brennan's poem "Each Day I See the Long Ships Coming Into Port" (1913) may be seen as addressing the very core of the Australian experience — the waves of migration from the farthest points of the earth which have shaped the culture and ethos of the continent of Australia in myriad ways. While it is part of the cycle of 14 poems in "The Wanderer", in which many critics see the figure of the poet himself, the poem can be interpreted in terms that are broader than the theme of personal quests. And, although H. M. Green does not entirely subscribe to the view of "The Wanderer" being an 'Australian' poem "except (for) the birth and residence of its author; and also because it is too large to be tied down by purely Australian comparisons" (1961: 522), emerging as it does, from the pen of an Australian poet, it may not be too out of place to see it as reflections on the migrant experience, even if this is not openly mentioned in the poem. Further, the theme of spiritual exile has an undeniably Australian resonance.
- 30 In spite of popular misconceptions — even among the educated — it is historically inaccurate to believe that the early travellers to Australia were only convicts. The first fleet of convicts went to Australia in 1788 and, in 1793, the first free emigrants came ashore. Migrants from England, Ireland and later from other parts of Europe came to Australia, attracted by dreams of a better life. Dickens and Trollope, for instance, would



send their sons to Australia. Many upper-class sons were shipped off to Australia if they didn't do well academically or were embroiled in a scandal. In 1831, the British government funded migration to Australia. The discovery of gold in 1851 furthered the influx of migrants. Australia rather rapidly (in 72 years) was transformed from a penal colony into a democracy, beginning with the establishment of legislative assemblies in 1855-1856. The migrants departed their homelands in fear and hope — fear of what they might encounter, the novelty of the unknown continent, and hope that they would have a future that would be in many ways better than what they could have looked forward to in the home country.

- 31 When we look at "The Wanderer" as a whole, while there is the motif of the quest, it does not appear to offer a specific goal sought by the wanderer. There is the implication of a personal sense of loss, an impulse that keeps the wanderer moving; or the wanderer is perhaps someone who does not feel at home anywhere, who can rest for only very short periods before embarking on his next journey. In the Latin epigraph, the wanderer tells us that his yearning for the "hidden heart", has made him become one with the "viewless winds" — strongly invoking in our mind's eye, the figure conjured up by Pablo Neruda, who declares that he needs the sea because it teaches him and that, even when he sleeps, he moves "in the university of waves" and the "the still power, out there, resolute," impels him to dedicate himself to the vibrancy of kinetic energy, to give his "commitment to its pure movement" (2003: 3).
- 32 Brennan refers to the sea in some of the other Wanderer set of poems, viewing it as "the ever-restless, ever-complaining sea" for instance; or he laments that his "mind drifts wide / where the blessing is shed for naught on the salt waste of the sea". He addresses the restless waters of the ocean: "O waves of all the seas, would I could give you peace / and find my peace again" (where the poet appears to seek oblivion in the sea), and in his evoking of "white delirious crests", he seems to suggest a rapturous and wild involvement in life while at the same time the association with death is paradoxically brought in by the phrase "black maw of hunger" which, as it opens wide just as each wave thunderously meets the shore, is heavy with the idea of death, exile and a dark despondency.
- 33 At another point, the contradictory nature of his longing is again expressed — when he is shut inside, crouching over the hearth, he longs for the freedom of the waste; but when he is battling the elements alone, he longs for the warmth of a home. The Wanderer poems have an unmistakeable underlying thread of restlessness and melancholia running through them and they convey a mood of restlessness — "I would spread the sail to any wandering wind of the air this night / when waves are hard and rain blots out the land" — and the figure of the Wanderer evokes the Nomads described by A. D. Hope:

Where ever they chance to stop, the roads go on,  
To nowhere, to anywhere. For them the one  
Despair is a fixed roof, a permanent stay. (1975: 5)
- 34 In "Each Day I See the Long Ships Coming Into Port", there is a strong sense of having reached the end of a quest, to a place which might offer succour and the travellers are pictured as filled with hope and gladness at the sight of land. While it is possible to trace the metaphor of the sea in Brennan's Wanderer poems and connect it with the wanderer motif, the focus, for the purposes of this particular paper, is on drawing out



the implications of the references to the sea, ships and travellers and relate them to the other poem under consideration — A. D. Hope's "Man Friday".

- 35 The poet muses as he looks at the ships sailing into the port with people crowding the rail, glad to be in sight of land at last, that it is because they have been so long out on the waters, "to have been alone with the sea", away from firm land and the daily commerce of the world, "not to have known / of anything happening in any crowded way." The first glimpse of land after they have been tossed on the sea waves for months at a time erases in a moment all the hardships and loneliness that they may have felt when surrounded by the expanse of the sea seemingly stretching away to infinity. The reader wonders: what were their hopes and fears as the waves rocked their vessel — a microscopic speck amongst the rolling crests? Did the past revolve in their minds and did the future seem to be one holding out promise? What did the waves prophesy?
- 36 In the midst of their trepidation and anticipation, one effect that the voice of "the crooning" sea has had is to charm "away the old rancours". The often monotonous sound of the waves and the force of the wind "have search'd and swept their hearts" of all their old grudges and bitterness — brushed the slate clean as it were, so that they are now in a position to make a fresh start in a new land. Steinberg recalls "the complexity of the ocean as a mobile space whose very essence is constituted by its fluidity and that thereby is central to the flows of modern society" (2013: 160).
- 37 The people who crowd to the deck in Brennan's poem appear to be ready to have the pages that have been scrubbed clean by the voyage over the sea filled up with new stories, fresh experiences, different songs, other relationships. In this sense, they are different from Hope's Friday as he was transported over the sea not by choice but by compulsion and had no idea what identity he would be forced to assume.
- 38 In a lecture to a group of architects in 1967, Michael Foucault called the ship at sea the "*heterotopia par excellence*", a space of alternate social ordering (Foucault and Miskowiec 1986: 27). This is where boundaries are blurred and finally eliminated altogether till the only social order that exists is that of 'humanhood', as it were. To link the ship to the sea needs no explanation, given their close and inextricable connection. And it is the ship which conveys the travellers over the sea to either a life of exile or one of burgeoning promise.
- 39 To the travellers, it is perhaps of not much significance that they have come to an alien land — a country that might require a great deal of adaptation before it will finally seem like 'home'. This could refer to the settlers and colonialists' first gaze on the environment, with undertones of how they perceived the Australian landscape, harsh and inhospitable, and how taming the land was a prerequisite to settlement. The long voyage with nothing but the sound of the waves and the sight of the sea to keep them company must have been fraught with anxiety and loneliness so that any land that can be glimpsed is welcome — "to their freshen'd gaze, each land smiles a good home" — and the prospect of landing on *terra firma* once more, walking with other human beings again, is a thrilling one. While they may have left their native lands with hearts bitter at their fellow humans' perfidy or the sorrow of persecution of all kinds, the disappointment that they may have felt is now swept away by the sea and the wind. All the negative feelings are no more than the foam on the waves as they find themselves at the rail of the ship longing to take up life afresh from where they had temporarily left it off.

- 40 The isolation and loneliness that can be inferred here could also be interpreted in the context of Australia's isolated status in terms of European culture and the fine arts, as well as its spiritual isolation. As Clive James comments, "No Australian poet before Christopher Brennan was fully conscious of the artistic problem posed by isolation from Europe" (1980: 6). The sea could be viewed as a ring of insulation as well because it was perceived as separating Australia and Europe. While, on the one hand, there were writers like Hope (instrumental in fashioning an Australian national imagination) who bemoaned the fact that creative people in Australia could not rise above their European mindset — they were "second-hand Europeans" to use his memorable phrase —, others like Brennan, in Clive James's words again, were "fully disabled by it".
- 41 A new world — as much as the vast ocean — might be overpoweringly frightening, concealing unknown shoals and reefs. But — and this is what the travellers ultimately would focus on — this world also holds out the promise of liberty which brings with it individual advancement and success leading to happiness.
- 42 In one sense, there is the acknowledgement that the sea — and by extension, nature — has the power to calm, heal and revive the human spirit by washing away all bitterness and prepare it to face the trials of the world with a renewed faith. The people and the ships could be said to symbolise the essentially restless, searching mind and eternally unsatisfied spirit of human consciousness. The quest and thirst for adventure motivates many to pull up their roots and leave home and hearth for unknown shores and possible dangers — history is full of tales of intrepid explorers and migrants who, by sailing forth on uncharted waters, have mapped and shaped the world as we know it today.
- 43 The erroneous perception that Australia lacked antiquity (the white colonialists could see no history of the continent before their arrival), saw a number of writers and political figures take up a stance wherein a belief in the future replaced lingering concerns with history. The ship is thus an appropriate metaphor since, viewed in the light of this belief, it can be seen to symbolise prophecy, anticipation and a reaching out to other cultures.
- 44 As the travellers watch their homeland recede, their identities drift away too. For the wanderers, the sea is the means to escape from the constraints of their previous life; by abandoning their former selves and allowing it to sink into the sea, as it were, they find themselves free to create whole, happy, unfettered selves in the new world. It is a world of shifting, fragmented identities. Like the sea, identity too is fluid and dynamic — assuming new shapes and forms and always open to relocations and repositioning. Friday, on being conveyed over the sea to England, is assigned a new identity. The travellers on the ship that Brennan sees are eager and prepared to forego their previous selves and be driven towards the forging of a new persona.
- 45 The poet/narrator feels a twinge of envy as he glimpses the open happiness of the people crowding the rail as they drift closer and closer to the port; he is driven to question this sudden unexpected emotion. Would he like to be in their place, to wander "hither and thither upon the earth and grow weary / with seeing many lands and peoples and the sea"? Would he like to take up the nomadic life of a wanderer, leading a rootless, unsteady sort of life? The question makes him pause to examine his own feelings. Not having thought of this before, he suddenly, in all certainty, feels that if he could be sure of a welcome and a chance to rest his troubled mind somewhere, he too might take the opportunity to spread his sails wide and catch a wandering wind,

allowing it to take him where it will. Is this a sign that all is not well in the poet/narrator's own life? The lines "but if I might, someday, landing I reckon not where / have heart to find a welcome and perchance a rest" indicate that it might make no difference where he went because he would carry with him everywhere the same feelings that trouble him now. He needs to come to terms with whatever is troubling him and only then will his heart allow him to find welcome and rest wherever he may be.

- 46 Macainsh comments that "The poet questions his envy but admits that he 'would spread the sail to any wandering wind' if he might find a welcome and rest. This is the aim of wandering, not to see 'many lands and peoples and the sea', but to find rest." (1974: 25) For many, the journey is the objective, regardless of what lies at the end of it. The sheer kinetic energy that informs the sway and power of the waves and winds is a goal to be aspired for in itself.
- 47 The poet wishes to set sail too, not to see many lands and peoples but to find an abode of repose as the people arriving in the long ships aspire to and may find in this new country. For them, in stark contrast to Friday's voyage to England, the voyage does not signify exile but a coming home, a land full of promise with the potential for great happiness and peace. Brennan, or the narrator, can be seen as the romantic, isolated observer, and the poem which begins with a wide-angle view narrows down and zooms into the personal space as it travels across the perceived feelings of the travellers to the narrator's own.
- 48 The setting of Brennan's poem is the point where the land meets the sea and the dominant image is of travellers reborn from the sea, washed clean of memories. In this amorphous space which is neither land nor water, there is a negation of the claims of any particular culture to possess absolute or universal truths or the 'right' way of life. The ending of Hope's poem, the climax, is set in this very same space. The movement is away — from the country that Friday wishes to leave behind, the sand that ushers in the entry into the sea and towards the submerging tide — while in Brennan's poem the action moves in the opposite direction: the ship approaches land and the passengers leave the sea behind and turn their faces and steps towards the new country. For the travellers described by Brennan, the sea is a means of transit, a vehicle that conveys them to a destination. For Friday, on the other hand, the sea itself is the destination, the home into which he finally retreats.
- 49 If the sea appears in Hope's poem as a symbol of exile, the recognition of despair, and finally a refuge, Brennan's sea is one of hope brimming with the promise of new beginnings. In that sense, they may be viewed as offering different perspectives of the sea, but both poems deal with voyages and the changes wrought upon the seafarers thereof, following the journey. For William Boelhower, the sea "leaves no traces. And has no place names, towns or dwelling places; it cannot be possessed." (2008: 92).
- 50 No, the sea can never be possessed. It can only possess and possess absolutely.

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## ABSTRACTS

In both Alec Derwent Hope's and Christopher Brennan's poems, the sea is fraught with multiple meanings. Both poets play with the ideas of journey by sea, exile, isolation and home in vastly different ways. A. D. Hope infuses it with the resonances of exile, barriers, division, and finally, home. The poem begins from where Daniel Defoe leaves off his tale, taking up the story of Man

Friday after he is brought by Robinson Crusoe to live in 'England's Desert Island'. The completely alien culture that Friday now encounters requires a massive readjustment of his mental and spiritual compass and the sea runs like an undercurrent through the entire poem even when it is not mentioned in so many words. The gradual acceptance of the way of life that is thrust upon him, his transformation (and quiet resignation) into an upper class servant and subsequent marriage and children take him farther and farther away from his memories and encase him within an artificial persona — until the day he accompanies his master to a sea port and hears the ocean's beckoning roar after many years. The song of the ocean, the rush of memory and Friday's response to the call of the sea crystallize in the ending of the poem. The poem not only raises issues of choice, 'savagery' versus 'civilization' and the arrogation of power over lives, it also envisions the sea as both a dividing barrier leading to exile and a welcoming bosom into the embrace of which to return is to go 'home'. Brennan's poem can be interpreted as addressing the very core of the Australian experience — the waves of migration from the farthest points of the earth which have shaped the culture and ethos of this continent in myriad ways. It is the sea that has conveyed the hopeful migrants hence and is invoked in terms of a cleansing — something that has 'charmed away the old rancours' and allowed them to see the new land with a 'freshen'd gaze'. The poet wishes to set sail too, not to see many lands and peoples but to find a place of rest perhaps, such as what the people arriving in the long ships aspire to and will find in this new country. For them, in stark contrast to Friday's voyage to England, the voyage does not signify exile but a coming home, a land full of promise with the potential for great happiness and peace.

Aussi bien dans le poème « Vendredi » d'Alec Derwent Hope que dans « Chaque jour, je vois de longs navires accoster » de Christopher Brennan, la mer est chargée de significations multiples. De manière très différente, les deux poètes jouant avec les idées de voyage par mer, de l'exil, de l'isolement et du chez-soi. Le poème d'A.D. Hope commence au moment où Daniel Defoe termine son récit, reprenant l'histoire de Vendredi après qu'il a été emmené en Angleterre par Robinson Crusoé. La culture complètement étrangère que Vendredi rencontre exige un réajustement important de son compas mental et spirituel, et la mer coule comme un courant sous-jacent à travers tout le poème, même si elle n'est pas mentionnée dans des termes concrets. L'acceptation progressive du mode de vie qui lui est imposé, sa transformation (et sa résignation discrète) en un serviteur à la disposition de la classe supérieure et le mariage par la suite et la venue des enfants éloignent Vendredi de ses souvenirs et l'enferment dans un carcan artificiel. Un jour il accompagne son maître dans un port maritime et entend le grondement de l'océan après bien des années. Le chant de l'océan, le flot des souvenirs et la réaction de Vendredi à l'appel de la mer se cristallisent à la fin du poème. Le poème soulève des questions non seulement par rapport aux choix à effectuer, mais aussi par rapport à la « sauvagerie » contre la « civilisation » et à l'appropriation de pouvoir sur les vies. Il envisage la mer à la fois comme une barrière qui mène à l'exil que comme un giron protecteur. Y retourner signifie retrouver sa demeure. Le poème de Brennan peut être lu et interprété comme un texte qui traite du cœur même de l'expérience australienne — les vagues de migration venant des coins les plus reculés de la terre qui ont façonné de multiples façons la culture et l'ethos de ce continent. C'est la mer qui a permis aux migrants porteurs d'espoir d'être transportés ce qui est invoquée en termes de « purification », quelque chose qui a « fait disparaître les vieilles rancunes comme par magie. » C'est encore la mer qui leur a permis de voir la nouvelle terre avec un « regard frais ». Le poète veut aussi prendre le large non pas pour voir beaucoup de pays et des peuples, mais pour trouver un lieu de repos, tout comme les gens qui arrivent dans de longs navires à ce nouveau pays. A la différence du voyage de Vendredi en Angleterre, le voyage ne renvoie pas à l'exil dans ce poème, mais bien à un retour chez-soi, à une terre pleine de promesses et à de possibilités de bonheur et de paix.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** mer, exil, isolement, chez-soi, poésie, Defoe Daniel, Hope Alec Derwent, Brennan Christopher

**Keywords:** sea, exile, isolation, home, poetry, Defoe Daniel, Hope Alec Derwent, Brennan Christopher

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